REMARKS

By this amendment, claims 33-36, 38, 39, and 41 are amended.

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33. (Amended) In a cellular radio communication network comprising a plurality of independent systems each providing service within a common geographic area, and operating within a frequency range comprising a plurality of frequency bands, a method of allocating frequency bands to said independent systems said method comprising the steps of:

assigning one or more first frequency bands to each of said independent systems, wherein said first frequency bands are used for control channels within the independent systems to which each is assigned; and

allocating one or more second frequency bands to said independent systems on a shared basis, wherein said second frequency bands are used for traffic channels within the independent system to which each is currently allocated.

34. (Amended) The method of claim 33 wherein said step of allocating comprises: allocating frequency bands from said second frequency bands for traffic channels within a first one of the plurality of independent systems independently of the allocation of said second frequency bands within a second one of the plurality of independent systems.

35. (Amended) The method of claim 33 wherein said step of allocating comprises: allocating one or more second frequency bands to each of said independent systems depending on the allocation of said second frequency bands to the other independent systems of said network.

36. (Amended) The method of claim 35 wherein said plurality of independent systems communicate over time division multiplexed channels, each channel defined by a frequency band and a time slot assignment, and wherein said step of allocating comprises:

receiving a channel allocation request from an originating one of said independent systems;

determining if channels are available in said network; and

in response to an affirmative determination:

transmitting a channel allocation assignment to said originating independent system.

38. (Amended) A cellular communications network providing service over a frequency range comprising a plurality of first frequency bands and a plurality of second frequency bands, said network comprising:

a plurality of independent radio communications systems, each of said independent systems providing service in a coverage area, the coverage areas of each of said independent systems having a common area, each of said independent systems being assigned one or more of said first frequency bands for use as control channels for each independent system and providing service over said plurality of second frequency bands on a shared basis.

39. (Amended) The cellular communications network of claim 38 in which one or more of said independent systems is assigned one or more fixed frequency bands for providing service in addition to providing service over said plurality of shared frequency bands.

41. (Amended) The cellular communications network of claim 38 in which each of said independent radio communications systems comprises one or more mobile telephone switching offices, and said network further comprises means for allocating unused frequency bands of said second frequency bands among said independent systems on a shared basis, said means for allocating connected to each of said mobile telephone switching offices.